

The Secretary of State presents his compliments to Their Excellencies and Messieurs and Mesdames the Chiefs of Mission and has the honor to inform all missions of updated requirements for A-1 and A-2 visa applications, and for requests for a change into such visa status.

Beginning July 1, 2014, the sending government must provide the following information in the diplomatic note submitted with any A-1 or A-2 visa application outside the United States, and for any request for a change into such visa status in the United States:

- the government official's or employee's name, date of birth, position and title, place of assignment or visit, purpose of travel, a brief description of his or her duties, travel date, and the anticipated length of the tour of duty or stay in the United States; and
- the names, relationships, and dates of birth of any dependents and other members of household who will be accompanying or joining the government official or employee.

While this circular note focuses on A-1 and A-2 visa application requirements, a diplomatic note with the same information must also be submitted with any C-3, G-1 through G-4, and NATO-1 through NATO-6 visa application and with any request

for a change into such visa status. Such a diplomatic note, however, is generally not required for routine renewals of A-1, A-2, G-1 through G-4, or NATO-1 through NATO-6 visas in the United States.

For accredited foreign government officials and employees who will be assigned to foreign missions or miscellaneous foreign government offices in the United States for 90 days or more, the “place of assignment or visit” must refer to the embassy, consulate, miscellaneous foreign government office, or mission to a designated international organization where the individual will be serving. The diplomatic note submitted on behalf of such accredited officials or employees must generally originate from the sending government’s foreign ministry, and not from an embassy, consulate, or miscellaneous foreign government office located in the United States. In the case of a career official currently assigned outside of the United States, the Department may accept a note from the embassy or consulate outside the United States where the official is currently assigned, provided the note certifies that the sending government’s foreign ministry requests the visa application.

A-1 and A-2 Visa Eligibility

The Secretary wishes to remind and inform the missions of the requirements regarding A-1 and A-2 visa eligibility.

A-1 visa classification is appropriate for career diplomatic agents at embassies and career consular officers at consulates, age 21 years or older. Acceptable titles for diplomatic agents include Ambassador, Minister, Minister-Counselor, Counselor,

First Secretary, Second Secretary, Third Secretary, Attaché, and Assistant Attaché.

Acceptable titles for consular officers include Consul General, Deputy Consul General, Consul, Deputy Consul, Vice Consul, and Consular Agent.

Individuals who will be working at an embassy or consulate, but who do not hold a diplomatic or a consular officer title, must instead apply for an A-2 visa. A-2 visas are appropriate for other foreign government officials and employees, including those working as administrative, technical, and service staff at embassies; consular employees and service staff at consulates; and qualifying miscellaneous foreign government office personnel.

To be eligible for A-1 or A-2 classification, foreign government officials and employees are expected to perform services for the foreign government on an essentially full-time basis (at least 35 hours per week) and to reside in the metropolitan area of the mission where the individual will be serving. Such officials and employees in A-1 or A-2 status may be employed only by the foreign government which provided the diplomatic note described above, and not by any other entity.

Department of State,

Washington, June 11, 2014.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a large, stylized loop followed by a horizontal stroke.